

MINUTES

**MONTANA SENATE
58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON SENATE AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 277

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN MIKE SPRAGUE**, on April 11, 2003 at 10 A.M., in Room 350 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Mike Sprague, Chairman (R)
Rep. Cindy Younkin, Chairman (R)
Sen. Kelly Gebhardt (R)
Sen. Bea McCarthy (D)
Rep. Dick Haines (R)
Rep. Monica Lindeen (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Pat Murdo
Lisa Gallagher

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed. Tape stamp refers to material immediately following.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: HB 277
Executive Action: HB 277

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 277

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 1.8}

SEN. SPRAGUE asked REP. YOUNKIN why the House did not like the amendment that the Senate put on HB 277.

REP. YOUNKIN explained to the Committee why they did not like the amendment, and she preferred to have the bill back to the original.

SEN. SPRAGUE said that it is fine to extend term limits for the legislators but it is not okay to extend term limits of state elected officials.

SEN. GEBHARDT said that there has only been one Governor in the history of Montana that was elected three times, and shortly after being elected to his third term he resigned.

SEN. SPRAGUE said that the Senate preferred REP. LINDEEN'S bill to SEN. TAYLOR'S bill, and we need to consider how it is going to be read at the ballot.

REP. YOUNKIN said that there have been plenty of statewide elected officials that have served for more than eight years.

SEN. ESP said that it is easy to make the argument to extend term limits for the legislators, and it is easy to sell this to the people in our districts because they can relate to us. It is not as easy for them to relate to the Governor.

SEN. SPRAGUE said that the Senate felt it was important for the legislators to get an extension, and if the statewide elected officials want it they can bring it up and it can be put on a ballot.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 6.3 - 7}

SEN. GEBHARDT said that there was a poll taken in Helena that showed that 60% of the people would reject the idea if it included the top five elected officials.

SEN. SPRAGUE said that he could see making a case for it if we had a popular Governor, but that is not here.

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REP. YOUNKIN said that when they looked at it they thought in a practical manner and could not see a reason why they would limit the top five elected officials and not the legislators.

SEN. GEBHARDT said the top five elected officials are full time and the legislators work 90 days every two years.

SEN. ESP said that four terms averages out to be 270 working days. He also said that he is opposed to including the statewide elected officials.

REP. YOUNKIN said that she does not think that the voters will make a distinction.

Motion/Vote: REP. YOUNKIN moved that HB 277 BE AMENDED. Motion failed 2-2, Younkin and McCarthy voting aye, by voice vote.

SEN. ESP said that if the legislators are sent to the voters it would pass, but if the top five elected officials are sent to the voters they will not pass.

SEN. SPRAGUE said that he wants the statewide elected officials off the bill.

REP. YOUNKIN said that REP. LINDEEN would like to see the bill come out of Committee.

SEN. SPRAGUE said that the bill should only include the legislators for now, and then let the statewide elected officials worry about themselves. For right now we need to go where the problem is and not where there is not a problem. He then asked REP. YOUNKIN if she could agree to this.

REP. YOUNKIN said that it was not her preference and did not see any practical reason for doing so.

Motion/Vote: SEN. GEBHARDT moved that HB 277 DO PASS. Motion carried 6-0, with REPS. HAINES and LINDEEN voting by proxy.

SEN. GEBHARDT said that they will get this on the ballot for the legislators and if it passes in two or four years put it on for the statewide elected officials.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 10:30 A.M.

SEN. MIKE SPRAGUE, Chairman

LISA GALLAGHER, Secretary

MS/LG

EXHIBIT (cch78hb0277aad)